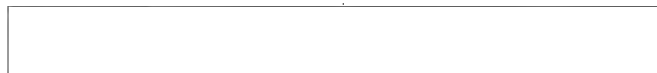




The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 8 January 1968



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DAILY BRIEF
8 JANUARY 1968

1. North Vietnam

The two suspected coastal defense missile sites south of Thanh Hoa were struck repeatedly by US aircraft on 5 and 6 January. There is no firm evidence from photography or pilot reports, however, that either site was occupied at the time of the attacks.

2. South Vietnam

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3. Congo

Ambassador McBride senses new trouble between the Congolese and the Belgians in the near future. He says the Congolese are becoming highly agitated over the Belgian position on the mercenary question.

Steps are being taken to get the Belgian press to cool its treatment of the issue and to head off a crisis by keeping President Mobutu somewhere near the degree of flexibility he seemed to have in his talks with Vice President Humphrey.

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4. Czechoslovakia

The selection of Alexander Dubcek to replace Novotny as party chief may have been a last-minute compromise. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] publicity spread had already been prepared on planning chief Cernik.

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Cernik, who had been considered the leading contender for Novotny's mantle, now seems a good bet to replace Lenart as premier when parliament meets Wednesday.

Although Dubcek, as a last-minute choice, is probably on shaky ground, his position is believed to have been strengthened by the expansion of the party presidium from ten to fourteen men. The four new men are relative newcomers to the national political scene, but they will give the presidium greater regional balance and some much needed experience in key economic problem areas.

A likely victim of further leadership changes is conservative ideology chief Hendrych. He tried to hop on the anti-Novotny bandwagon last month but was told it was too late and that in any case his record was against him.

5. Cyprus

Three of the five Greek ships which arrived last Wednesday have now left again with some 1,500 troops and 180 vehicles, including 18 tanks and 11 scout cars. With what is expected to be taken out on the other two ships shortly, Ambassador Belcher now thinks that 7,000 "illegals" will be pulled out by the 23 January deadline. He thinks it may be time to start needling Ankara about withdrawal of Turkish "illegals."

The Turkish Cypriot press is trying to belittle the extent of the Greek withdrawal. In any event, the Turks are likely to hold to their claim that there are a lot more than 7,000 Greek "illegals" on the island.

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6. Brazil-Peru-France

France seems close to completing long-pending sales of Mirage super-sonic jet aircraft to Brazil and Peru.

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The Brazilian Government has not yet made a final decision, but the air ministry has recommended purchase of the Mirages instead of our F-5s. It cites the ten-year payment terms and the possibility of exchanging coffee and other products as plus factors for the Mirages.

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For its part, Peru is going ahead with its plans to buy 12 Mirages;

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam



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8 January 1968

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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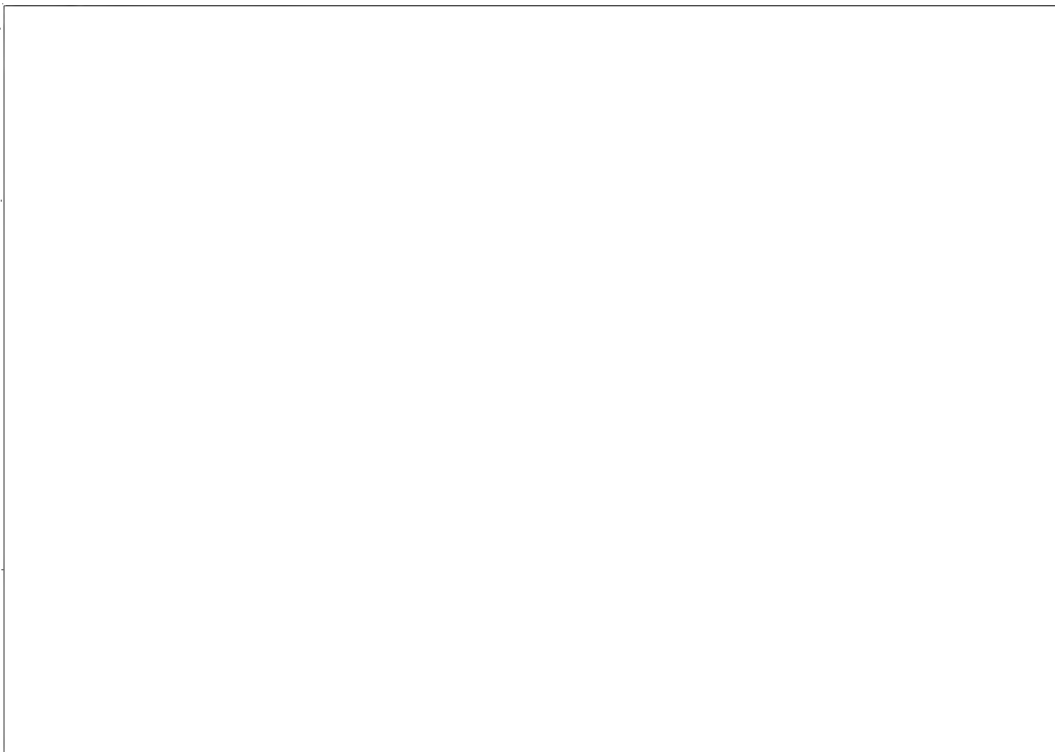
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French Views on Hanoi's Negotiating Posture:
Etienne Manac'h, the Director of Asian Affairs for the French Foreign Ministry, told an embassy officer in Paris Saturday that Mai Van Bo, Hanoi's representative in Paris, had confirmed to him on 3 January the "official nature" of Trinh's statement. Manac'h claimed Bo intended this confirmation to be passed to US authorities. Manac'h went on to say that the Trinh statement in no way changes the French government's understanding of Hanoi's position; Paris already knew that Hanoi was ready to enter into talks if bombing were halted unconditionally.

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[redacted] Reports
on the living and working conditions of the North
Vietnamese people continue to come in [redacted]
[redacted] The most recent add to the
growing body of evidence that Hanoi has engaged in
an extensive relocation of industry, particularly
in the heavily bombed areas of the southern prov-
inces.

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One report gives details of the organization
of civilian bomb damage crews. The peacetime regu-
lation that each adult donate 25 days of labor to
state projects each year was broadened in 1965 to
a requirement that all adults under 45 respond to
unlimited calls for work anywhere for any length
of time. Only after the first 25 days of such
duty does the state begin to supply the workers'
food.

A medical technician who worked in a hospital
in the northwestern part of the country for ten
years reports that the young Vietnamese-educated

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medical doctors are not nearly as well trained as the older French-educated ones in his hospital. He also reports that political considerations severely hampered the administration of his hospital.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report.

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